

Office of Congressman Charles W. Dent
Proudly Representing Pennsylvania's 15th District



For Immediate Release
June 16, 2006

Press Contact: Gregg W. Bortz
610-861-9734 or (cell) 202-222-5118

Congressman Dent cites progress, challenges in winning the Global War on Terror

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Rep. Charlie Dent (PA-15), a member of House Homeland Security Committee, spoke on the House floor and entered the following statement into the Congressional record concerning America's commitment to prevail in War on Terror globally and secure the homeland:

“The Global War on Terror is, by virtue of its title, a war with world-wide scope. As a member of the Homeland Security Committee, I am particularly concerned about the way in which this war can impact our way of life *here*, in these United States. And I believe that we have been doing a fine job of trying to make sure that terrorists or agents of foreign powers DO NOT harm us on our shores.

“Since September 11 the Homeland Security Committee has enacted or sponsored legislation designed to insure the safety of the people living in this country. In HR 1544, the Faster and Smarter First Responders Act, we tried to make sure that homeland security grant dollars are spent according to risk, and not with regard to political concerns. In HR 1817, the Homeland Security Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006, we authorized the recruitment and training of 2000 new border patrol agents to insure that terrorists are not able to penetrate our land borders.

As part of the Global War on Terror we have likewise worked hard to make sure that goods moving into this country are secure. In HR 4954, the SAFE Port Act of 2006, the Committee authorizes \$821 million annually for port security programs. This bill further requires the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to deploy nuclear and radiological detection systems at 22 US seaports by the end of FY07, an action that will cover 98% of incoming maritime containers. Further, it makes sure that the people working at our port facilities are properly cleared and identified by forcing DHS to set deadlines for the implementation of the Transportation Worker Information Credential (TWIC) program, a biometrically-enhanced identification card system designed to make sure that those who would seek to commit acts of terrorism against us are NOT allowed to work within the U.S. port system.

“We have also worked hard to make sure that our transportation modalities are also protected in this Global War on Terror. In HR 5441, the Homeland Security Appropriations bill, which the House passed on May 25, 2006, we appropriated \$2.05 billion for Coast Guard port and waterway security operations, \$2.6 billion to screen airline passenger baggage, \$13.2 million for rail security inspectors and explosive detection canines, and \$458 million for biological, chemical, and explosives countermeasures to protect the nation’s critical infrastructure.

“Of course, in addition to securing our transportation modalities, we have also taken steps to make sure that terrorists in the Global War on Terror are NOT able to access what they clearly would most like to get their hands on—nuclear materials. The SAFE Port Act codifies in law the establishment of the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office (DNDO). Earlier this year I had the opportunity to visit the DNDO facility in Nevada, and I am firmly convinced of the importance of maintaining the vitality of this organization. The DNDO has one of the most important missions within the DHS—the detection and identification of nuclear materials. During my visit, I observed first-hand the testing of nuclear and radiological countermeasures, including detection devices designed to identify vehicles transporting nuclear explosive devices, fissile material, and radiological material intended for illicit use. The SAFE Port Act further requires the DNDO to conduct testing of next-generation nuclear and radiological detection equipment and to put forth a timeline for completing installation of such equipment at all U.S. seaports.

“Members of the Homeland Security Committee have worked hard to insure the safety of Americans, our commerce, and our infrastructure. Since September 11, we have not had a major terrorist incident in this country. And I believe that it is appropriate to attribute this positive development at least in part to the efforts of the leadership of this Committee, which is determined to make sure that the homeland is indeed a safe place.”

###